***STRATEGY CORNER:*Iowa Reading Association Newsletter**

*Bookmark Technique – start by reading together, then independently*

The purpose of the Bookmark Technique is to monitor comprehension while reading and to make evaluative judgments about aspects of text. Monitoring, Knowing How Words Work, Making Connections and Evaluating would be some comprehension strategies included in this activity using Narrative or Expository text. Use this activity during and after reading.

Begin by explaining and modeling the Bookmark Procedure. Have students create four bookmarks by folding and cutting 8.5 x 11 inch sheets of paper into four equal parts. (These can be prepared in advance.) As students read, have them make decisions and record specific information on each bookmark, including the page and paragraph where their choice is located.

• Bookmark 1 — write and/or sketch about the part of the text that they found most interesting.



• Bookmark 2 — write and/or sketch something they found confusing.

• Bookmark 3 — write a word they think the whole class needs to discuss.

• Bookmark 4 — student choice (a favorite illustration, graph, another focus word, etc.)

Use the completed bookmarks to promote discussion about the text.

*Character Retrieval Chart -* get children to think a little more deeply about the characters

“Describe the Character.” Have a chart of characteristics that students can use to get beyond the “mad, sad, happy” tendency.

“Of whom does this character remind you?” a good discussion questions. Students have compared the characters to members of their own family, characters in other books, friends, etc.

“What is the author trying to say through this character?” really inspires some creative thinking.

The strategy can be adapted and enriched to suit the teacher’s need. At times I have had two common novels going in the classroom. The students complete the form and compare the characters of their respective novels. This chart can also be used as a mental model for a writing assignment.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Character  Name | Describe the Character | Relationship to Other Characters | Of whom does this character remind you? | What usually happens to characters like this? | What is the author trying to say through this character? |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
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*The Four Square Writing Method*

The “Four Square Writing Method” by Judith S. and Evan Jay Gould is a unique method of teaching basic writing skills that is applicable across grade levels and curriculum areas. It uses a graphic organizer to help children focus their writing.

I have been using a modified version with sequencing the past two years in my first grade classroom. A topic is chosen. We put it at the top of the four squares and brainstorm ideas about it. A one- or two-word detail or idea is put in each square. This helps the children to learn what a sentence is by writing about each detail. Before using this method, they tended to write run-on sentences or never punctuate until the very end of their story. Now they know they have to have a sentence beginning with a capital and ending with a punctuation mark for each square idea. In a short simple story, the first sentence announces what their story is about. The next four sentences refer to that topic and tell about the four squares. We use a summary, or sometimes a feeling, sentence for our last sentence. This method has worked especially well when writing a description.

After students become competent with the short paragraph, they can add supporting details and use each square as a subtopic and paragraph. Transition or “connecting” words can be added to provide smooth reading when changing paragraphs.

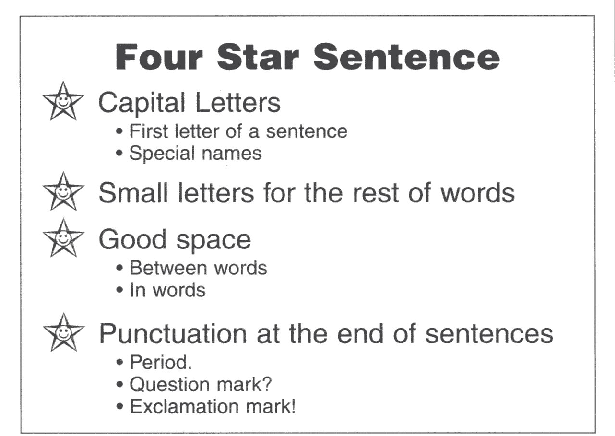
Getting Reading for Field Trip Other Ideas

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| jackets | name  tags |  | procedure  leaders  first aid kit |
| book  bag | school  bus |  |  |

We got ready for a field trip. We put on our jackets. We wore our name tags. We fixed a bag of books to take along. We got on the school bus. We were ready to go on our study trip.

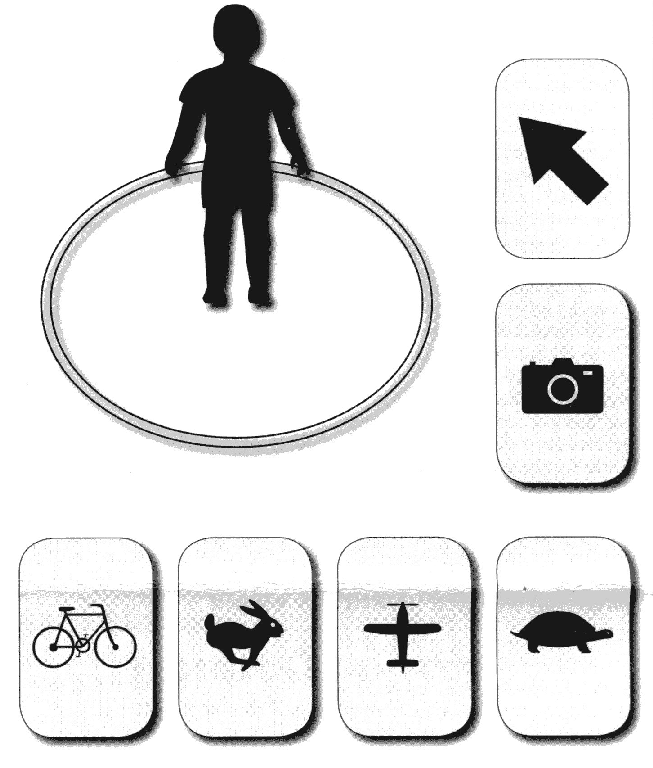
(Written as a group in late September)

*The Four Star Sentence*



The Four Star Sentence poster is in many of our first grade rooms, but could be used in upper grades as well. The four requirements of a good sentence are listed with a star beside each as follows: capital letters (first letter of a sentence, special names), small letters for the rest of the words, good space (between words, in words) and punctuation (period, question mark or exclamation point) at the end of the sentence. Students are to check their writing before handing it in to be sure they have a “four star sentence.” Some teachers have added a fifth star, that a sentence also needs to make sense.

*Hula Hoop Words – blending words or putting words into a sentence, fluency*



In this activity students practice segmenting sounds in words and then blending them back together. Modify by having the words in sentence on the cards, students say each word as they raise the hula hoop, then put them into a fluid sentence as they lower it.

Materials needed: Hula Hoop and Picture cards (optional).

Say a word or show the students a picture card. Ask a student to stand inside the hula hoop. As each sound in the picture card/word is sounded out, raise the hula hoop up. After the last sound is stated, blend all the sounds together to make the word as the hula hoop is lowered back to the ground.

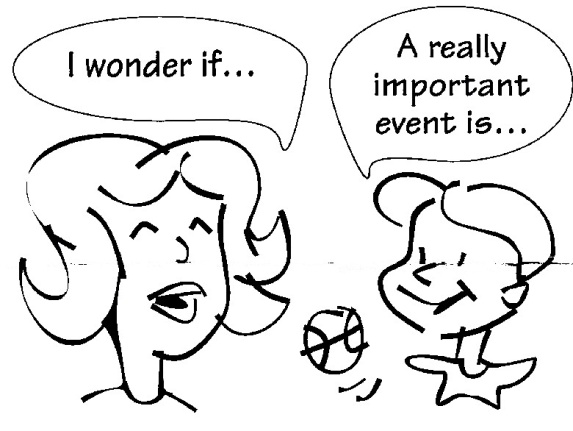
*Literature Circles – students learn to lead their own discussion groups*

Two important ideas, independent reading and cooperative learning, come together in this practical and exciting response to quality literature. After the students are trained and oriented in their roles, this kindergarten through high school strategy allows students to actively and enthusiastically lead discussion groups. Among some of the more popular roles are:

* **Discussion Director**—student writes several “fat” questions which cannot be answered in a single word.
* **Word Wizard**—student selects vocabulary words which seem interesting or important to the story.
* **Connector**—student makes a connection from the story to a personal event in their life, or compares the story to another book, movie or experience they’ve had.
* **Artful Illustrator**—student is responsible for drawing or sketching a picture which depicts their favorite part of the story and explains why this seems important.
* **Character Maker**—student selects the main character, or sub characters, and uses descriptive words, quotable quotes, or describes their actions and reactions.
* **Passage Master**—student may select their favorite part of the story, part that puzzles them, makes them laugh, or a selection that summarizes the story.

*“Say Something”—Bringing Readers to Discussion*

We talk about the storyline, the characters, and the illustrations. We ask each other about “the big ideas”. We share favorite parts. We compare the book with other books by the same or different authors. We do all of these and more because the book engages us. We are drawn in and the book becomes part of us.

While most of our students are natural talkers, we can help bring them to story discussion with the “Say Something” strategy.

Start with the whole class, practice several days, then form small groups of 2, 3, or 4 members.

1. Look over the chapter.

2. Your and your group choose a stopping point—page #\_\_.

3. At the stopping point, take turns saying something…

4. Continue saying something until two people “pass.”

5. Choose the next stopping point—page #.

6. Repeat the steps until you have finished reading the text.

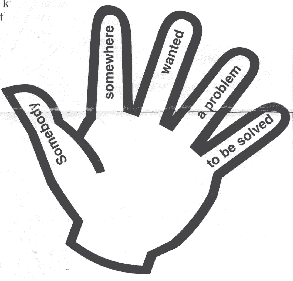
*Retelling: A Comprehension Strategy*

Five components to teach it:

1. Description of the strategy and when it should be used.
2. Modeling of the strategy.
3. Teacher-student collaborative use of the strategy.
4. Guided practice using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility.
5. Students’ independent use of the strategy.

Retelling is a strategy that can be used in grades K-12, because what is required of the student can be quite simple or quite detailed. The following six types of retelling could be used:

* Oral-Oral: Students listen and retell orally.



* Oral-Drawing: Students listen and retell by drawing.
* Oral-Writing: Students listen and retell in writing.
* Written-Oral: Students read and retell orally.
* Written-Drawing: Students read and retell by drawing.
* Written-Written: Students read and retell in writing.

Before students actually under take any of the above ways of retelling, they need to know what is expected of them. Do they know what story elements are included in retelling? Do they know that they need the following explicit information (these could vary):

**“Somebody somewhere wanted a problem to be solved.”**

**Characters Setting Initiating Event Problem Solution**

In retelling, organizers of various kinds can be used, pictorial representations, other graphic organizers or e a hand with the sentence, “Somebody somewhere wanted a problem to be solved.”

During the sharing and comparing stage which follows the written retelling, students read their own retelling and their partner’s retelling, comparing both retellings to the original text, noting vocabulary substitutions, writing styles, individual interpretations of the text, and writing conventions.

It is suggested that retellings be done in groups of three over a three-week period.

**WRITING A RETELL Procedure** – with words or pictures depending on the grade level

1. Choose a short selection such as a fable, two or three paragraphs about a topic from a content area, a short story, an article from a current events magazine or newspaper, etc. Length range should be from 100—300 words, depending on the grade level of the class.
2. Make a copy for each child.
3. Fold the copy so that only the title shows.
4. Read the title to the students and have them write a prediction—what they think the selection will be about.
5. Share the students’ predictions orally.
6. Have the students read the selection. Give a set amount of time, usually 10—15 minutes. Students may read and reread as they wish during that time.
7. Collect the papers with the selection.
8. Ask the students to write a “retelling” of the story/selection they have just read.
9. Pair students and have them share their “retellings” and compare them with the original text.

*SEARCH Strategy – non fiction*

The SEARCH strategy is a great grade 2-12 strategy to use with your students when they are asked to research a topic. When using the strategy to do research, the project should focus on a question to be answered by the group rather than on a general topic. This comprehensive strategy will stimulate students to find answers to questions they have generated from their reading.

S Select a specific topic of interest to study.

E Establish what students know, think they know, and want to know about the topic – KWL Chart.

Write the three categories on chart paper or the whiteboard. Have them work individually first, then in small groups to stimulate ideas. Record ideas in each of the three categories.

A Ask questions to raise curiosity and to challenge students by asking for more specific information when they share their ideas about the topic.

R Read resource material or textbook to verify what they know and think they know, to answer questions, and to raise new questions.

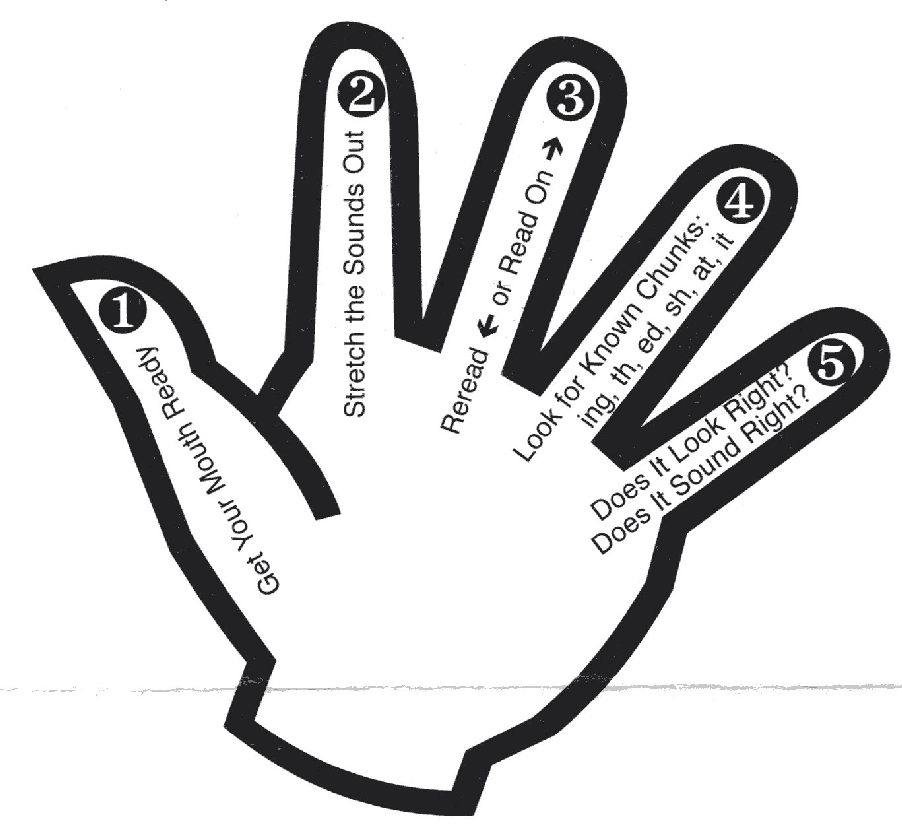
C Come together; share and review responses in small groups.

H Have a large group discussion to share what children learned, and to identify unanswered as well as new questions for further research.

*The Strategy Hand – beginning readers*

Each finger has a strategy that a child is encouraged to try, to figure out a new or unfamiliar word.

1st strategy - “get your mouth ready.” It tells a child to look at the word, see the first letter and get your mouth ready to say the sound that letter makes.



2nd strategy - “stretch the sounds out.” This encourages the child to say the sounds slowly, in sequence, to put them together and make a word.

3rd strategy - “reread-read on.” Pictures of arrows accompany reread and read on. They tell the child that rereading up to the tricky word, or reading on and skipping the word, might help to figure it out.

4th strategy - “look for chunks of sounds.” These chunks might include the *ing* ending, digraphs, or bases that the child knows from other words.

5th strategy - “cross-checking” The child is asked to think, “does it look right?” and “does it sound right?” If it doesn’t do both, the child needs to try something else.

*Be a Word Cheerleader – beginning readers and SPELLING*

When introducing sound blending, ask students to be football or basketball cheerleaders. Ask a student to come forward, holding a pom-pom (perhaps your school colors). Using magnetic letters, the teacher puts one letter on the board.

For example, “Give me a C!” Children state letter name and then say the letter sound /c/. “Give me an A!” Children state letter name, then say letter sound /a/. “Give me a T!” Children state letter name, then say letter sound. Teacher says, “What’s that word?” Children blend the word together slowly to say c-a-t and the cheerleader says, “cat.”

It would be fun for all students to have their own pom-poms. This method works well for spelling as well.

*Words to Fluency – sight words (high-frequency words)*

Helping students become fluent readers is often impacted by their ability to recognize high-frequency words. A goal for bringing words to fluency is for students to remember words in every detail and help students apply what they know about these words to help them get into and solve unknown words as they read and write them. Presenting words through a variety of tasks helps students use different modalities to learn these words in every detail. Here are some quick ways for students to practice these words:

* Write the word in the center of a white board or paper saying each letter as they write.
* Write the word again in upper left hand corner saying each letter as they write.
* Write it again in each corner while saying each letter.
* When you’ve written it five times, draw a fence around the word. Start at the top-left side of the word and draw a line around each letter of the word making straight lines left to right and up and down around each letter. At the end of the word draw a line to the bottom of the word and make straight lines right to left and up and down around each letter to the beginning of the word and then close the gate by drawing a line back up to the top-left side of the word. (This will teach students the shape of the word—configuration.)
* Erase the slate, write the word fast. Write it again faster.
* Write the word in the air.
* Find a partner and take turns writing the word on each other’s back. As your partner writes the word on your back, write the word in the air.
* Cheerlead the word: ( see cheerleading technique) Do this three or four times.)
* Using magnetic letters, have students unscramble letters to spell a word. Mix the letters back up and have them unscramble the letters again.
* C:\Users\angela\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\GO1UKRNB\MC900281970[1].wmfHave words on flash cards. Play “My Pile, Your Pile” by flashing the words to student. Any word they recognize at sight goes to the student and any word not recognized at sight goes to the teacher/partner.
* Using highlighter tape, have students underline high-frequency words in text.
* Give students many opportunities to read and reread words in text. (Reader’s theatre, repeated readings, partner reading, paired or buddy reading, etc.)